(b) Rs. 60.33 crores to be realised on account of import of fatty acids.

(c) Rs. 3.00 crores as investment made in Tea Trading Corporation of India (TTCI), a wholly owned subsidiary of STC.

The Board of Directors of STC considered the comments and keeping in view the facts that the amounts at (a) & (b) above are debts to be realised from the Government and sale of tea gardens is under process in TTCI, the Board decided not to make any provisions for these amounts. The shareholders of STC in the Annual General Meeting also approved the stand taken by STC Board.

Import of Rubber and its Impact on prices in Indian Market

962. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow import of rubber during the next year;

(b) if so, the details of quantity proposed to be imported;

(c) the quantity of natural rubber imported during this year;

(d) whether Government are aware of the impact of import on the price of rubber in the Indian Market; and

(e) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise

(c) The Government have not allowed import of rubber duty free during the current financial year, so far. 8990 Tonne of natural rubber have been imported during April to September, 1996 by Rubber Goods Exporters under Advance Licence/Special Import Licence.

(d) and (e) Since import is generally allowed to the minimum extent required to bridge the gap between indigeneous demand and supply, it does not affect the market adversely.

Study on Child Labour in Beedi Industry

963. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study has been done on the extent of child labour in beedi industry in the country;

(b) if so, the date of such a study;

(c) the recommendations of this study; and

(d) the steps taken to implement recommendations for elimination of child labour in the beedi industry?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) While no specific study has been done recently on the extent of child labour in beedi industry in the country, the Labour Bureau, in a report "The working and living conditions of workers in Beedi Industry in India" has indicated that in beedi industry about 31% of home workers were men, 68% women and 1% were children.

(b) The report was published on 10th October, 1995.

(c) and (d) Though there was no specific recommendation relating to child labour in beedi industry, Government has already taken steps for rehabilitation of child labour working in hazardous occupations including beedi industry. So far 76 child labour projects have been sanctioned to cover about 1.5 lakh children. Under the projects the children withdrawn from work are put special schools where they are provided with non-formal education vocational training, nutrition, health check and stipend.

Poor quality of Wheat and Rice supplied through Fair Price Shops

964. SHRI GYAN RANJAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that wheat and rice supplied through Fair Price Shops are of very poor quality;

(b) whether any surprise checks of the Fair Price Shops are conducted to check the quality; and